

Jennifer Carr
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Office Hours: Fridays 2–3
H&SS 8037

1 Course Description

This course will cover a variety of topics in recent epistemology: recent theories of knowledge and higher-order knowledge (weeks 2-4); the ways in which various theories permit what we intuitively think of as epistemically irrational: biased investigations, avoiding evidence, and forming beliefs arbitrarily (weeks 5-7); belief revision theory (week 8); and social epistemology (weeks 9 and 10). These topics draw tools from both formal and informal epistemology, including epistemic logic, elementary set theory, probability functions, decision theory, and theories of judgment aggregation. Students will receive a survey of the basics of these formal tools, while at the same time seeing them implemented in cutting edge epistemology.

2 Prerequisites

This course has no prerequisites. I will aim to presuppose as little as possible, with your cooperation. I *strongly encourage* students to ask questions that they worry might be too basic. Students may come to this class with wildly different levels of familiarity with different formal tools. If you aren't shy about asking questions and risking seeming unimpressive, you will learn *much more*—and therefore be more impressive in the future. The only math we'll presuppose is multiplication and division.

3 Requirements

- (15%) **Weekly participation:** bring a question or two (or three or...) to every session of the class. Our discussion will be mainly organized around working through your questions. The more elementary (i.e. foundational!), the better.
- (25%) **Fortnightly problem sets:** The best way to learn how to use a formal tool is to practice using the tool yourself. You are permitted to collaborate with other students on problem sets, but your answers must be written independently (i.e. by yourself, based on your understanding of the collaboration rather than other students' words), in your own words, in a way that demonstrates your own understanding. (If, for example, student *A* has written the answers and students *B* and *C* are typing up their answers while looking at *A*'s written answer, this is *not* a permissible form of collaboration.) This is obviously and unavoidably vague; use good judgment and when in doubt, ask. *If you collaborate with other students on any part of a problem set, you must cite those other students by name in that part of the problem set.*
- (60%) **Term paper(s):** *Noûs*-length final paper or two or three *Analysis*-length papers. *Phil. Review*-length papers are permitted. (I'm mainly concerned with you fleshing out at least one idea, but plan on writing at least 15 pages for the course.) Note: your term paper is not expected to establish a formal result!

Students may take the class P/NP; then the requirements are weekly participation, problem sets, and one *Analysis*-length paper. Auditors are enthusiastically welcomed.

4 Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.

(858) 534-4382 (phone) | osd@ucsd.edu (email) | <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu> (website)

5 Tentative Plan

This plan is subject to revision. All readings will be available on the course website.

Week 1 *Tools for formal epistemology*

- Wed Oct 2 Weatherson, *Notes on Decision Theory*, Ch. 1.1, 1.2, 2 (ignore 2.5), 3, 4, 6, 7 (ignore 7.2), 9, 11, 12
Devlin, *The Joy of Sets* ch. 1: “Naïve Set Theory”
Hájek and Titelbaum, “Some Handy Probability Facts”

Week 2 *Access*

- Wed Oct 9 Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* Ch. 4 and 5
Schoenfield, “Internalism without Luminosity”

Week 3 *Knowing that You Know*

- Wed Oct 16 Greco, “Could KK Be OK?”
Das and Salow, “Transparency and the KK Principle”

Week 4 *Knowing that You Know II*

- Wed Oct 23 Dorst, “Abominable KK Failures”
Goodman and Salow, “Taking a Chance on KK”
Dorr et al., “Knowing Against the Odds”

Week 5 *Biased Investigations*

- Wed Oct 30 Salow, “The Externalist’s Guide to Fishing for Compliments.”
Ahmed and Salow, “Don’t Look Now”

Week 6 *Avoiding Evidence*

- Wed Nov 6 Campbell-Moore and Salow, “Avoiding Risk and Avoiding Evidence”
Doody, “Consider the Ostrich”

Week 7 *Arbitrary Beliefs*

Wed Nov 13 Srinivasan, “Archimedian Urge”
 Schoenfield, “Meditations on Beliefs Formed Arbitrarily”

Week 8 *Belief Revision*

Wed Nov 20 Lin, “Belief Revision Theory”
 Gardenfors, “Epistemic States”

Week 9 *Judgment Aggregation*

Wed Nov 27 List, “Group Knowledge and Group Rationality”
 Pettit, “Groups with Minds of Their Own”

Week 10 *Systems Design*

Wed Dec 4 Sunstein, “Deliberating Groups versus Prediction Markets”
 Zollman, “The Communication Structure of Epistemic Communities”